

## **Survey of Other Jurisdictions' Height Calculations**

There is a wide variation in how jurisdictions calculate height. Variations in height measurements on hillside lots tend to be even greater among jurisdictions. To illustrate this, listed below are the various “from” and “to” measurement points for various jurisdictions.

### **Where height is measured “from” the ground.**

- finished grade/point where the lowest foundation or slab meets finished grade (New Illustrated Book of Development Definitions, attached illustration)
- average finish grade of the lot covered by the building (City of Carpinteria)
- preconstruction (existing) grade at the highest point on the lot to be covered by the structure (City of Palos Verdes)
- along a line at existing grade bisecting the width of the lot (City of Redondo Beach)
- average established curb/highest adjoining sidewalk (City of Ventura, Uniform Building Code)
- average level of the highest and lowest point of that portion of the lot or building site covered by the building (County of San Luis Obispo)
- average finished grade at the corner points of the building line (City of Ventura)

Note that the City of Santa Barbara's practice of measuring height of a structure from all points of natural grade under a structure is not shared by any of the jurisdictions cited above and could be considered a more liberal interpretation of height than some of the definitions provided above.

### **Where height is measured “to” (how high on the building's roof).**

- top of the highest roof beams on a flat or shed roof, the deck level on a mansard roof, and the average distance between the eaves and the ridge level for gable, hip, and gambrel roofs (the City of Carpinteria – 20' max., County of Santa Barbara, Uniform Building Code, New Illustrated Book of Building Definitions, attached illustration)
- ridgeline or the highest point of the structure (City of Rancho Palos Verdes)
- highest, topmost point of a building or structure/ highest points of the coping of a flat roof or to the height of the highest gable of a pitch or hip roof (City of Redondo Beach – 30' max., County of SLO - 16' to 25' max. height for hillside areas, Santa Monica – 25' max. height, County of Ventura – 30' max.)

Note that the City of Santa Barbara measures to the highest point of a structure, regardless of the roof style, similar to the City of Redondo Beach, County of SLO, Santa Monica and County of Ventura.

Other jurisdictions tend to provide more definitions for natural grade and finished grade than the City of Santa Barbara does. The County of Santa Barbara definitions for these terms, as follows, located in the County of Santa Barbara Grading Ordinance appear to be sufficient definitions. Additional definitions of these terms from other jurisdictions and the Planner's Dictionary are planned to be provided for consideration in the Hillside Issue Paper scheduled in August.